

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Ayesha Mahajan, and I am from Storrs, CT. I am also part of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England.

I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

Healthcare is a critical necessity for all individuals regardless of immigration status. Being able to seek medical care should not be limited to immigration status because it is a matter of people's livelihood and well being. As a pharmacy technician I see many people struggling to afford life saving medications on a daily basis due to the fact that they do not have access to health insurance. I have seen individuals choose between their antibiotics and their mortgage. This is beyond unacceptable. People should not have to consider the cost of their medications when buying a necessary prescription for their wellbeing. Healthcare access is critical especially right now with the pandemic, the impacts of COVID-19 are unpredictable and it is crucial that all individuals have the proper access to health care. I know many people who are reluctant to go to the doctors because they fear that the costs will be far more than what they can afford. This is not a sacrifice individuals should have to make. This bill would allow them to be able to obtain the treatments that they need to ensure that they will be able to maintain their health.

Last year Connecticut expanded HUSKY access to children ages 0-8, passing SB284 this year would ensure that children will not age out of coverage once they turn 9 years old and be left without healthcare. The work does not end after expanding access up to 18 years of age. We need to ensure that all immigrants, including parents and adults, are able to have access to HUSKY and the healthcare they need. It is critical that the state of Connecticut creates a long term plan to expand HUSKY to our entire immigrant community. Expanding the access of HUSKY beyond the age of 18 will allow those who are affected by the pandemic to get the necessary treatment and make sure that they are able to continue working. Healthy kids need healthy families. In order to keep their kids healthy parents must be healthy and the only way this is possible is to ensure that parents are able to have access to healthcare. It is proven that when parents and caregivers have access to healthcare their children do as well. Children do better when their parents do better. Provide HUSKY to the entire immigrant community to ensure that no one is left behind.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,
Ayesha Mahajan